

DIOCESE OF BURLINGTON

INSTITUTE FOR CATHOLIC ENRICHMENT
AND
LAY APOSTOLATE FORMATION

History and Rationale

In 1994, the Diocese of Burlington established a Lay Ministry Training Program in order to “call forth, affirm, and support the gifts and talents of adults in fulfilling their mission in the church.” The Program provided opportunities for enriching the laity in their knowledge and understanding of the Roman Catholic Church, growth in spiritual life, and development of skills necessary for effective participation in ministry.¹ Over the course of the past ten years, 145 people from across the Diocese have completed this formation program and most are currently serving in a variety of ministerial areas in their parishes.

On August 26, 2005, in anticipation of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ document, *Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord*, addressing lay participation in the mission of the Church, the Diocesan Lay Ministry Training Program Board presented a proposal to The Most Reverend Kenneth A. Angell, Diocesan Bishop of Burlington, requesting a one-year period of reassessment for Lay Ministry Training within the Diocese of Burlington. On September 1, 2005, this proposal was approved.²

On November 15, 2005, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops approved the document *Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord* as a resource to guide the Church’s experience of lay participation in the ministry of Jesus Christ. This document focused on those whose service is characterized by “authorization of the hierarchy, leadership in a particular ministry, close collaboration with the pastoral ministry of bishops, priests and deacons, and appropriate formation.”³ The Lay Ministry Board addressed this initiative and presented this document to the Diocesan Presbyteral Council and received its approval.

Call of the Lay Faithful

Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord states that the sacramental basis for all service done by laypersons in the Catholic Church is the sacraments of initiation, not the sacrament of ordination. The lay faithful who discern a call to lay service in the Church hear and respond to the universal call to holiness primarily and uniquely in the secular realm. Their service is to be exercised in accordance with the specific lay vocation to which they are called. Lay persons collaborate with ordained ministers and are not to be construed in any fashion as substitutes for the ordained ministry. Their positions often involve coordinating and assisting others in the community.⁴

This same thought had previously been expressed in the 1997 Vatican Instruction: *On Certain Questions Regarding The Collaboration of the Non-Ordained Faithful in the Sacred Ministry of Priest*. It stated: “It is necessary that all who are in any way involved in this collaboration, exercise particular care to safeguard the nature and mission of sacred ministry and the vocation and secular character of the lay faithful. It must be remembered that ‘collaboration with’ does not, in fact, mean ‘substitution for.’”⁵ Elaborating on this theme, the document continues by saying: “Thus the essential difference between the common priesthood of the faithful and the ministerial priesthood is not found in the priesthood of Christ, which remains forever one and indivisible, nor in the sanctity to which all of the faithful are called: ‘Indeed the ministerial priesthood does not of itself signify a greater degree of holiness with regard to the common priesthood of the faithful; through it, Christ gives to priests, in the Spirit, a particular gift so that they can help the People of God to exercise faithfully and fully the common priesthood which it has received’. For the building up of the Church, the Body of Christ, there is a diversity of members and functions, but only one Spirit who, for the good of the Church, distributes his various gifts with munificence proportionate to his riches and the needs of service.”⁶

Aims of the Program

The Lay Apostolate Formation Program aims have been, and will continue to be, to provide formation for those lay men and women who seek to work in “an ecclesiology of communion that looks upon different gifts and functions not as adversarial, but as enriching and complementary. It appreciates the church’s unity as an expression of the mutual and reciprocal gifts brought into harmony by the Holy Spirit. It recognizes diversity in unity and acknowledges the Spirit as the source of all the gifts that serve to build up Christ’s body” (1Cor. 12:4-12, 28-30).⁷ It is, therefore, within this context that the Lay Apostolate Formation Program of the Diocese of Burlington intends to connect the Lay Faithful’s call to service in the church with the Ministerial Priesthood established by Jesus Christ so that they may work together to bring about a deep communion that unifies all of the People of God through the Church, the Body of Christ.

More specific aims of the program are:

- To provide enrichment for those who seek adult on-going formation in their Catholic faith by providing a firm and practical foundation in Scripture, Liturgy and Sacraments.
- To call forth, affirm and support the gifts and talents of participants as they strive to glorify God and serve God’s holy people by fostering a deeper appreciation of the Baptismal call of the faithful to service in the church and for the building up of the Kingdom of God.
- To provide education, training and support for those called by the pastor in consultation with the parish staff and parish council to service apostolates through continued studies and practical formation in Ecclesiology, Morality, Spirituality and exposure to concentrations in ministry such as catechetics, R.C.I.A., pastoral care of

the sick and infirmed, bereavement, social outreach, marriage preparation, youth ministry, and other parish programs.

- To nurture spiritual growth and fidelity to the Church of all who participate, as well as to help them prayerfully and critically reflect on their own experiences in ministry and deepen their relationship with Jesus Christ especially through the Mass, the Sacrament of Reconciliation, prayer and the Liturgy of the Hours.
- To develop an awareness, appreciation and respect for “the diversity and complementarity of vocations and states of life, of ministries, of charisms and responsibilities”⁸ in the Church.

Program Name

Over the course of the past ten years, it has become apparent that there is a need to provide formational opportunities for those who wish to enrich their knowledge of the Catholic faith in order to bring the life of Christ to others, and there are those who feel a call to come forward to assist their brothers and sisters in the Lord and are willing to prepare them and/or coordinate particular parish ministries. This program, intends to address both of these situations and, therefore, the program will be known as:

“The Institute for Catholic Enrichment (ICE) and Lay Apostolate Formation (LAF)”

Program Focus and Duration

In order to provide both enrichment and leadership opportunities for participants, this program is designed for two groups: those seeking enrichment (one year only) and those who feel called to lay leadership under the direction and supervision of their pastors (three years).

Enrichment Focus: All candidates will participate in year one which will focus on enhancing Catholic identity and enriching one’s understanding of our Catholic faith through study of Holy Scripture, Sacraments and Liturgy.

Leadership Focus: Before year two courses begin, applications would be accepted from year one participants to continue formation directed toward a fuller knowledge of Catholic teachings for those seeking a leadership role on parish committees or in parish programs; those seeking a leadership role in ministerial or teaching areas such as extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, lectors, music ministers, outreach ministries, visiting sick and shut-ins, prisons, religious education, R.C.I.A., Bible study, adult education, youth ministry, etc. and spiritual formation to assist them with these ministries. Courses will be offered in Human Development and Knowledge of God, Ecclesiology, Morality and Spirituality.

Pastoral Skills Focus: Candidates will work toward developing pastoral skills in year three by designing and leading a ministry project and by participating in practical training days which will focus on communication, conflict management, ethics, etc. Those who feel the call to the Diaconate will also have the opportunity to discern that call further during this year and complete the requirements for application to that program.

The Program:

The program is designed to integrate the four pillars of lay formation described in *Co-workers in the Vineyard of the Lord*: human, spiritual, intellectual and apostolic. Since it is the whole person who ministers, formation must be a “dynamic and progressive movement of life, a continual process in the individual of maturation in faith and a likening to Christ according to the will of the Father under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.”⁹ Thus the program is designed to enhance these aspects of the individual’s growth.

- Human - by developing a personal maturity that fosters genuine interpersonal relationships modeled in the life of Jesus Christ
- Spiritual – by “arousing and animating true hunger for holiness, a desire for union with the Father through Christ in the Spirit, and daily growing in love of God and neighbor in life and ministry and the practices of prayer”¹⁰ and the experience of spiritual direction.
- Intellectual - by offering a “sound mastery of the church’s rich tradition of faith, life and worship,”¹¹ through academic studies of Scripture, Catholic Church teaching and traditions, Ecclesiology, Morality and Christian Spirituality.
- Apostolic - by offering practical training in specific areas of service, understanding how the “gift of self” made to the Catholic Church through particular apostolic work serves the church.

Human Formation:

The program, through healthy and respectful relationships among candidates with their pastors, instructors and fellow students, intends to develop human qualities and character that will form the foundation for personal growth and ministerial service.

The following courses constitute the core of this Human formation:

- **Human Development and the Knowledge of God (Part I – Beginning of Enrichment Focus) (5 hours)**

This course will provide the participants with the opportunity to better understand their own journey in faith as part of a larger experience of God in human history. It will give participants a fuller appreciation of their own relationship with God and the importance of sharing the gift of faith with others in the journey of the Christian life.

- **Human Development and Knowledge of God (Part II – Beginning of Leadership Focus) (8 hours)**

This course will build on the introductory course and will provide participants with a more in-depth look at the experience and presence of God in human history.

- **Workshop: Interpersonal Skills and Communication (8 hours)**

This all-day workshop will be offered during the third year to assist candidates in developing good interpersonal relationships necessary for effective ministry through such techniques as listening skills, conflict management and the Myers Briggs assessment.

Spiritual Formation:

Spirituality is a reality that is totally integrated into every facet of one's life. Spiritual formation, then, occurs throughout the program and hopefully continues thereafter.

The primary focus of this component is to help the participants deepen their relationship with God through prayer and reflection with emphasis upon the Most Holy Eucharist and the sacramental life of the Church. The Sacrament of Reconciliation will be highlighted as a sacred opportunity to experience the mercy, forgiveness and compassion of Jesus through the sacramental ministry of the Church.

- **Retreats and Days of Reflection**

Enrichment Focus:

At the beginning of the Enrichment Focus, all participants will share in a 24-hour Day of Reflection to prayerfully prepare them for the year ahead and to provide them with an opportunity to learn to pray the Liturgy of the Hours. At the end of the Enrichment year, all participants will join in a Day of Reflection at which time they will receive Certificates of Completion.

Leadership Focus:

At the beginning of the year that will focus on Leadership, those who have been accepted to continue in the Program will be required to attend a full weekend retreat. This retreat will focus on ways in which God may be communicating to us. The retreat experience will stress the importance of silence and quiet reflection, and with the help of the directors, provide an opportunity for the participants to be absorbed in God and to meditate upon the Lord's presence in the Most Holy Eucharist and the Sacraments of the Church.

At the end of the Leadership Year, all candidates will participate in a Day of Reflection. This day will focus on the upcoming year's projects and service to the parish communities. There will be time for quiet reflection to pray that God will increase in them a servant's heart.

Pastoral Focus:

At the end of the third year, all candidates will come together for a final 24-hour Day of Reflection prior to the celebration of the Rite of Sending. This time will be spent in quiet reflection preparing for the Holy Spirit to guide and direct them throughout their future years of service to God, His Church and their parish communities. Praise and thanksgiving to God for all the goodness and gifts He has bestowed upon all of the candidates will be the central theme of this reflection time.

- **Spiritual Direction**

The participants will be encouraged to meet regularly with a spiritual director who will help them continue their journey with the Lord. The responsibility of the director is to give counsel, and to listen and respond, probe and raise questions in order that the participants may know more clearly how God is entering their lives.

- **Communal Prayer and Worship**

Prayer and time for worship with others is another important aspect of spiritual development. Participants will be invited to assist in the preparation and leadership of prayer whenever there are gatherings or meetings during the formation program.

Intellectual Formation

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and its *Compendium* are the sources for the theological and scriptural components of the program and provide the framework around which the content is designed.

The courses are practical and pastoral in nature, rather than theoretical. The content combines Catholic theological perspectives with a practical application to the participants' ministry and life experiences.

The courses also acknowledge that adults approach learning with respect to the skills and experiences they bring to education and formation programs. Sessions will include time for prayer, formal presentations, small and large group discussions and other means to assist the participants to understand how to use the knowledge gained in both their ministries and their lives. Participants are expected to be active learners and to prepare for each class through reading, reflection and other methods.

The courses which constitute the core of the Intellectual Formation are:

- **Introduction to Scripture (4 hours – Prior to beginning Enrichment Focus)**

This course will introduce approaches to reading Scripture and will look at the Vatican II document *Dei Verbum*. It will discuss how the Catholic Church looks at Scripture and fundamentalism.

- **Scripture: God's Word Revealed in Time (32 hours)**

In this course, the participants will experience the Bible as a living text. The course will be divided into two parts: The Old Testament (14 hours), the New Testament (12 hours) and Christology (6 hours).

The Old Testament will focus on God's self-revelation to the Jewish people and their experience of liberation, worship and growth in faith.

The New Testament section will show how God continues to demonstrate a desire to be in relationship with all people through the life, teachings, attitudes and ministry of Jesus Christ.

The Christology section will focus on the nature, person and deeds of Jesus Christ as revealed through and in Sacred Scripture.

The course will be presented to allow participants to develop a better understanding of the nature, purpose and formation of the Scriptures and an appreciation of their own life and ministry in relation to the Word of God.

- **Dogmatic Theology: The Sacramental Celebration of the Paschal Mystery (10 hours)**

The focus of this course is the worship of the Church and the celebration of the Paschal Mystery in Word and Sacrament as well as other liturgical celebrations. In addition to an examination of the theology and celebration of liturgy, participants also will be challenged to reflect on their own experience of worship as a means of growth in faith and sharing in the communal life of the Church. This course will include Church documents pertinent to the liturgy such as *Redemptionis Sacramentum* and the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*.

- **Dogmatic Theology: The Seven Sacraments of the Catholic Church (14 hours)**

The focus of this course is the sacramental life of the church. Sacraments of Initiation, Healing and Vocation/Service will be studied. Participants will reflect on how the sacramental life of the church enriches them personally and touches all the faithful at the important moments of our life in Christ.

- **Dogmatic Theology: Ecclesiology: Church and Ministry (20 hours)**

This course begins with the Vatican II image of the Church as the People of God moved by the power of the Spirit to continue the mission and ministry of Christ. Participants will examine the changes in the experience of the church and ministry throughout the history of Christianity. A deeper understanding of the mission of the Church provides the context for a theology of ministry and an appreciation of the Baptismal call of all Christians. The course will also provide information about diocesan structures, policies and offices. This course will also emphasize the major Councils of the Church and the teachings of the Fathers of the Church.

- **Dogmatic Theology: Morality: Life in Christ (20 hours)**

Christian moral life is expressed in attitudes and actions that are in accord with the Beatitudes. The starting point for the course in Christian moral living is the call of Christ to live free and faithfully according to the desire for “the good” that God has placed in the hearts of all. The course will examine the concepts of freedom and responsibility in human action and explore ways to develop a life of virtue. The reality of sin, the dimensions of conscience and the role of Church teachings in moral living will be presented.

- **Christian Spirituality (20 hours)**

In this course, the Church’s rich tradition in spiritual development and reflection will be presented as the foundation for a life of prayer and will emphasize ways to continue to deepen the participants’ own spiritual growth. The course will consider the theology of spirituality emphasizing the centrality of Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit. Beginning with an overview of the history of Christian spirituality from its Biblical roots through the

tradition of the mystical saints, the participants will learn about some of the mystics' lives and experiences, their teachings and some selections from their writings. Common elements among the mystical saints as well as differing forms of prayer will be considered.

Apostolic Formation:

Throughout the program, participants will be challenged to understand how the gifts they have to offer to the Church as lay persons can be made manifest in specific areas of service through apostolic works that serve the Church. The Pastoral Focus of the final year will present opportunities for practical learning through workshops and seminars and in practice through the planning and completion of a service project in the participants' parishes under the direction and supervision of their Pastors.

- **Ministry Specialization Workshops (September)**

At the beginning of the final year of the program, various workshops in specific ministerial areas would be offered to assist the candidates in the area of service they choose. Some examples are:

- Family Life Ministries
- Liturgical Ministry
- Catechetical Ministry
- Evangelization
- Care for the Sick and Dying/Bereavement Ministries
- Outreach Ministries
- Right-to-Life Ministries
- Youth Ministry

- **Interpersonal Skills and Communication Workshop (November– 6 hours)**

This workshop will be offered during the third year to assist candidates in developing good interpersonal relationships necessary to effective ministry through such techniques as listening skills, conflict management and the Myers Briggs assessment.

- **Policies Workshops (January – 6 hours)**

This workshop will assist participants with an understanding of the Diocesan ministerial code of ethics, recognizing and reporting abuse, and issues and situations surrounding confidentiality.

- **Canon Law Workshop (March or April – 6 hours)**

This workshop will explore those sections of the canons of the Code of Canon Law of the Roman Catholic Church that relate to the lives of the faithful such as recognized ecclesial marriages, dispensations, inter-communion laws, etc.

- **Service Project (on-going throughout the third year)**

Participants will be asked to undertake a supervised service project which will provide an experiential setting in which they can demonstrate competencies and develop more fully concrete skills required in a pastoral situation within a specific ministry. The participant will be assigned an advisor from among the members of the Program Board and will complete the project under the supervision and direction of their pastor. The project would be proposed by the participant and accepted by the program Director and the participant's pastor. At the completion of the project, the participant would prepare a written report of the results and would assess the effectiveness of the project.

- **Project Presentations (May 6-hours)**

Each participant would prepare a 10-15 minute presentation on their ministry project that would be presented to the Program Board and other members of the class.

General Admission Requirements

From among the members of the Church, laity come forth who are willing to be formed by and accountable to the Church, the very Bride of Christ. The program of formation for laity is obliged to carefully select those with a charism for Christian service in their local communities. Thus the screening process needs to discern applicants and assess them according to the following criteria:

- An appreciation and support for the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church and the documents of Vatican Council II;
- Willingness to give time and energy in service to the Church;
- Ability to study and learn;
- Personal and spiritual maturity;
- Openness and respect for others and those in authority;
- High school education preferred or its equivalent;
- Minimum age of twenty-one.
- There will be a northern and a southern section for most classes.

Program Commitment

- Attend classes for the hours required and per the instructor's schedule from September to June for the duration of the program in which one is a candidate;
- Attend Days of Reflection and one weekend retreat per program requirements;
- Coordinate and evaluate a supervised service project.
- Ongoing spiritual direction

Application and Interview Process:

Information meetings should be held in the northern and southern sections of the Diocese to explain this program for those who may be interested prior to the application deadline. There will be an orientation day for all participants prior to the first class meeting.

Enrichment Focus Application Process

- A maximum of forty (40) people would be accepted for Enrichment.
- Those applying for admission would be required to complete an application and request a letter of recommendation from their Pastor.
- If an applicant has not already done so through their parish, they would be required to complete a background check.
- Applicants must be Catholics in good standing who fulfill the requirements specified in Canon 874 of the Code of Canon Law and be willing to commit themselves to this time of study.
- Candidates for the Enrichment year would not be interviewed; rather, their acceptance would be determined based on their application and their pastor's recommendation.
- Candidates must attend a Day of Reflection at the completion of this year of studies and they will receive a Certificate of Completion.

Leadership/Pastoral Application Process

- A maximum of thirty (30) people would be accepted to continue into the Leadership/Pastoral portion of the program.
- Applicants would be required to submit the following to the Program Director:
 - o Letter of continued support from their Pastor;
 - o Letters of recommendation from two active members of their Parish, one of whom would be the Assistant Pastor where a second priest is assigned to the Parish;
 - o Letter of petition to the Director to continue in the Program;
 - o A brief biography (two to three pages) from the applicant covering their understanding of ministry and a list of all ministries in which they participate or coordinate.;
 - o Willingness to commit to the time required to fulfill the program requirements;
 - o If married, have the support of their spouse.

- The candidate must agree to seek out a spiritual director if they do not already have one.
- Applicants would be interviewed by members of the Program Board prior to acceptance for the second year of studies.
- Candidates will also be required to attend a full weekend retreat organized by the Program Board before beginning the second year.
- At the end of the year, they will meet with the Program Board to present a ministry project proposal and review evaluations submitted by their instructors.
- Attend all seminars and workshops scheduled as part of the program.
- During the third year, those who wish to discern a call to the Diaconate should contact the Diaconate Director. They will, however, be required to complete all requirements of the Lay Apostolate Formation Program.
- At the conclusion of this final year, candidates will participate in a Day of Reflection and Prayer prior to the Rite of Sending.

Cost Structure

Enrichment: Year 1

The parish, participant and diocese each contribute \$250. This will cover the cost for instructors' stipends, the Day of Reflection, materials, supplies, textbooks (Christian Prayer, Catholic Study Bible, Catechism of the Catholic Church, Catholic Rites, Liturgy Documents, etc.).

Leadership: Year 2

The parish, participant and diocese each contribute \$325. The Program will cover the costs of all books, instructors' stipends, materials and supplies, a full weekend retreat and any other costs associated with the program.

Pastoral: Year 3

The parish, participant and diocese will each contribute \$250. The Program will cover the costs of all books, instructors' stipends, materials and supplies, the final Day of Reflection, Rite of Sending and any other costs associated with the program.

Timeline for review of applications

Information meetings will be held during January and February prior to the Enrichment year.

Enrichment Year:

- All materials for the Enrichment must be received by April 1.
- Applicants will be notified by June 1.
- Orientation workshop will be held by June 30.
- Day of Reflection will be held in August.
- Formal program begins in September.

Leadership/Pastoral Years:

- All materials for the Leadership and Pastoral years must be received by March 1st during the Enrichment year.
- Processing of applications and interviews will be completed by May 30.
- Applicants will be notified by June 15.
- A weekend retreat will be held in August.
- Classes will begin in September.

Instructor Stipend

The instructor stipend to develop, prepare and teach a 20-hour course is \$1,500. The stipend for courses with less than 20-hours will be adjusted proportionately.

Relationship with Program Graduates and their Continuing Formation

After candidates have been “Sent Forth” for service in their respective parishes, the Institute For Catholic Enrichment (ICE) and Lay Apostolate Formation (LAF) must be committed to providing forums for prayer, reflection, communication, educational development, and networking. It is the intention and hope that the Program will offer continuing support and ongoing formation for these graduates in their chosen ministries under the supervision and direction of their Pastors.

To ensure this aspect of the program is realized, a current member of the Program Board will be appointed to chair a Lay Apostolate Graduate Education Sub-committee with selected committee members all of whom will be appointed by the Diocesan Bishop after his personal review and approval. This sub-committee will report to the full Program Board and to the Chancellor, who oversees the Lay Apostolate Formation Program. They will be charged with the responsibility to develop programs for graduates that will enrich their ministries or increase their awareness and knowledge of the Roman Catholic Church’s position on major issues such as physician-assisted suicide, Right-to-Life, etc. All proposals considered by the Program Board must subsequently be reviewed and approved by the Diocesan Bishop prior to implementation.

Accepted and Promulgated,

The Most Reverend Salvatore R. Matano
Bishop of Burlington

ENDNOTES

1. “Ministry Training Program, Diocese of Burlington”, Most Reverend Kenneth A. Angell, Bishop of Burlington, March 8, 1994.
2. Letter from Most Reverend Kenneth A. Angell, Bishop of Burlington, to Reverend Stephen J. Nichols, September 1, 2005.
3. U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord*, Origins: CNS Documentary Service, Volume 35, Number 25, December 1, 2005, p. 406.
4. *Ibid*, p. 408.
5. *Libreria Editrice Vaticana*, *Instruction on Certain Questions Regarding the Collaboration of the Non-Ordained Faithful in the Sacred Ministry of Priest*, Vatican City, 1997, p. 2
http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/laity/documents/rc_con_interdic_d...
6. *Ibid*, p. 4.
7. U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord*, Origins: CNS Documentary Service, Volume 35, Number 25, December 1, 2005, p. 410
8. Pope John Paul II, “The Vocation of the Lay Faithful in the Church and in the World” (*Christifideles Laici*), paragraph 20 in *Origins*, Volume 18: Number 35 (February 9, 1989) 561-595. and (Washington, DC: USCCB, 1998).
9. *Origins*: CNS Documentary Service, Volume 35, Number 38, March 9, 2006, p. 632
10. *Ibid*, p. 632
11. *Ibid*, p. 633

Please refer to the USCCB Document: "Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord":
<http://www.vermontcatholic.org/CatholicFormation/CoWorkersInVineyardofLord.pdf>